

Customer Case Study: Costanza Builders



Prolog Software Helps Costanza Builders Increase Revenue and Productivity

Costanza Builders is a third generation, family-owned company that has served the Delaware Valley region since the 1920's. Based in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, the company's three divisions – Construction, Engineering, and Development covering commercial and residential construction – offer a broad range of services and expertise to effectively manage its projects from concept to completion. Costanza Builders' specialties include multi-family residential, hospitality, commercial, education, and urban redevelopment.



The Need for Real-Time Information

Over the past 10 years, Costanza Builders' need for real-time information to manage its projects has been of paramount importance. While the company has had many software systems in place over the years, integration and sharing was limited. This would soon change.

First, the company revamped its entire MIS system, providing networked PC's throughout its corporate office and in every field location. The company then adopted the use of Prolog Manager®, a state-of-the-art project management software program from Meridian Systems, as a platform for all its engineering and project management needs.

According to Nancy Gendron, operations manager for Costanza Builders, Prolog was initially evaluated for a large, multi-site school project. There was limited time for implementation and the project teams had to get it right. Prolog delivered!

"One of the most important things that Prolog did for us was centralize our data, which allowed up-to-date information to be shared by each project team as well as the home office. Executive management and the accounting department were thrilled to have access to current information," remembers Gendron. "Prolog gave us the ability to be more proactive in managing each project and it was much easier to close out and archive a project. Prolog simplified complex procedures."

From Initial Bid to Project Completion

Costanza Builders has continually upgraded Prolog Manager to leverage the many new features and functionality that Meridian has added to the software. Today, every employee relies heavily on Prolog, from the project manager and superintendents at each jobsite to administrative, accounting, and executive management.

Costanza Builders uses Prolog as its foundation in managing dozens of projects on an ongoing

basis ranging in size from \$5M up to \$35M each. Prolog use begins with the preconstruction phase, long before a shovel breaks ground. The company uses Prolog's reporting capabilities and templates to create and manage a huge database that is available throughout the lifecycle of a project. A data repository is started in Prolog during preconstruction and is then readily available for use in construction and the award of contracts.

"When a new project is ready for construction," explains Gendron, "all the paperwork is there. We don't have to re-enter information that has been recorded somewhere else." This feature maintains important correspondence on jobs that start construction after a long period of time. "If a project is delayed for approvals, we don't have to worry about finding the data since it is stored in Prolog."

Best-In-Class Project Management

Costanza Builders' 80+ year reputation is another reason why the company chose Prolog. The ability to publish professional and consistent documents resulting in better communications for each project is a top priority. "When we provide management reports using Prolog, it makes a statement to our clientele that 'this company provides the critical information needed in a way that's easy to understand,'" states Gendron.

"By standardizing our project management," she adds, "Costanza Builders personnel are more productive, which contributes to revenue growth. The outcome is more effective project management. Now our managers are using their time to manage projects rather than look for missing pieces of information. By using Prolog, we can handle more with less effort."

Gendron attributes the company's output to Prolog's Document Management features, tracking capabilities, and customized reporting. Submittals, transmittals, RFI's, change orders, and more are quick to generate and easy to track. Automatic alerts keep critical issues from slipping through the cracks. And all reports have been customized to meet company needs.

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*Nancy Gendron, operations manager,
Costanza Builders*

Collaboration is another important benefit that Costanza Builders has realized with Prolog. "Our work product is very 'dynamic' and is the result of many people entering pieces of information every day over the course of every project," Gendron explains. "The ease of being able to quickly look at our projects in Prolog to get an accurate picture is something we previously lacked. By managing our costs and budgets in Prolog, we know where we are at any given point in time."

While sharing is required, user-based security protects sensitive information. But Prolog's built-in flexibility allows quick action for special circumstances. For example, Costanza Builders can quickly grant one project manager access to another project manager's job if back-up is needed. Every detail is readily available in the software.

A Valuable, Long-Term Investment

Although Costanza is currently running Prolog Manager version 7.2, Gendron is excited about upgrading to version 7.5 because of the program's new integration with Microsoft Outlook. "We use Outlook heavily in our company and the tie-in to Prolog will be another time-saving feature that will further support our document management and productivity goals."

When asked to summarize Costanza's investment in Prolog over the years, Gendron says this: "When we look at what each version of Prolog gives us and the product improvements that are continually being made, we see a significant value in our investment. Prolog will be with us for a long time."



Costanza Builders Project Profile

The LumberYard Condominiums located in Collingswood, New Jersey

The LumberYard Condominiums, located in downtown Collingswood, New Jersey, is a mixed-use project with retail and residential units and underground parking. The development, nestled in the heart of town, is part of the borough's urban transit redevelopment program and is intended to spur growth along the commuter rail line, which services the metro Philadelphia region.

Now under construction, the LumberYard includes three buildings with retail space at street level, underground parking and two new borough streets. The retail units are expected to meet the borough's demand for new stores and restaurants, while the upper level residential area is being marketed to young professionals and adults now considered "empty nesters."

Results

The developer, LumberYard Redevelopment LLC, plans to deliver the project in three phases in response to market demand. Additionally, each unit is being offered with a complete range of options. As builder/general contractor, the Costanza Builders team will utilize sophisticated project management controls to respond to the dynamic needs of each phase and each unit's customized features while maintaining delivery dates for the developer.

Key Project Elements

- › Four-acre redevelopment tract, assembled by the borough, consisting of a former lumberyard and several other parcels designated for redevelopment into residential and commercial space
- › Two new streets with vintage street lamps, brick paved walkways and public gathering places, along with all required infrastructure and utilities
- › 120 luxury residences with a variety of amenities such as courtyards, patios and secure lobby entryways
- › 20 street-level shops and restaurants
- › Construction of below-grade garage parking, integral with the buildings and hidden from view to preserve the streetscapes; integrated parking also includes 135 public spaces for shoppers and visitors
- › Building architecture featuring brick and stone facades to remain consistent with the historic character and ambiance of Collingswood and fashioned after the city of Philadelphia's colonial style

Estimated value for project design and construction: \$35M

Estimated completion date for the entire project: December 2007



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